The Excellency of the Christian Revelation, as it promiseth Assistance, and compleat Salvation to Sinners.

A

SERMON

Preach'd in the

Cathedral Church of St. *PAUL*,
November the 6*th.* 1699.

Being the Eighth, for this Year, of the Lecture founded by the Honourable

Robert Boyle, Esq;

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1 Tim 1. 15.

This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the World, to ſave Sinners.——

IN diſcourſing of the Method, in which the great *Mediator between God and Man, Chriſt Jeſus*, hath undertaken *to ſave Sinners*, I propos'd to conſider the *Neceſſities* of fallen Men, and thereby to evince both that we had very great need of the aſſiſtance of a *Mediator*, and that no Method, which we can poſſibly think of, could have ſo fully anſwer'd the end of providing for our *Neceſſities*, as that which our bleſſed Saviour, by his *coming into the World* hath been pleas'd to take.

The *Neceſſities* of Men I reduc'd to *four* Heads.

Firſt, A ſuſpicion and jealouſy of Mind concerning God, and an Alienation from him, as conſequent thereupon.

Secondly, A groſs ignorance of God, of themſelves, and of the ſeveral particulars of their Duty.

Thirdly, An indiſpoſition and inability to comply with the Divine Will, although it ſhould be fully and clearly reveal'd.

Fourthly, After all, an incapacity of removing thoſe other evil and miſchievous Conſequences, to which their ſins had expos'd them, and of obtaining for themſelves that compleat Salvation, which they ſtood in need of.

The *two* former of theſe I have conſider'd at large, and now proceed to thoſe *two* which remain, which I ſhall treat of with greater Brevity, what I have to offer upon theſe Heads, not requiring ſo much inlargment, as on the former.

Thirdly therefore, The next Difficulty which fallen Men are under, is this, That they find themſelves indiſpos'd and unable to comply with the Divine Will, even when it is fully and clearly revealed to them.

Whoſoever will impartially conſider what I have offer'd, touching the *Precepts* and *Example* of our Bleſſed Saviour, and will ſeriouſly ſtudy the Writings of the New Teſtament, in which a particular account of each of them is contain'd, muſt acknowledge, that a profeſs'd Chriſtian cannot want ſufficient *Inſtruction*, in all the particulars of his Duty: But there is ſtill ſomething farther neceſſary, *viz.* to be both *able* and *willing* to comply with the *Precepts*, and to imitate the *Example* thus ſet before him. Chriſtians themſelves confeſs, and complain with the Apoſtle, that they *ſee another Law in their Members, warring againſt the Law of their Minds*, which, antecedently to the Grace of the Goſpel, *brings them into Captivity*. And the Adverſaries of Chriſtianity make this a great Objection againſt our holy Profeſſion, and I doubt not but that it is, at the bottom, the principal ground of their Infide-

Rom. 7. 23.

lity,

lity, that the *Precepts* of our Lord are too ſtrict, and his *Example* too exact, to be complyed with and imitated by humane Nature. And this is evidently the Reaſon, why ſo many profeſs'd Chriſtians act diſagreeably to their Profeſſion, *viz.* That their Appetites and Paſſions are too ſtrong for their Underſtanding and Reaſon: they know the Will of God, and inwardly approve it, but cannot prevail with themſelves to obey it: *to Will*, that is to have ſome faint and imperfect inclination to act according to the conviction of their Judgments, *is preſent with them*; but how *to perform that which is good, they find not*: So that *the good which they would, they do not; but the evil which they would not, that they do*, as the ſame Apoſtle emphatically expreſſes it. And all this is but one of thoſe evil Conſequences, which, as I obſerved in a former Lecture, naturally follow our apoſtacy from God. Verſ. 18, 19. Lect. ij. p. 20, 21.

My preſent Buſineſs therefore is to ſhew, what Proviſion our *Mediator* hath made in this caſe; and this I ſhall do, in the *three* following Particulars.

I. Our Bleſſed Saviour hath provided in this inſtance, by annexing ſuch Sanctions to his Precepts, as do naturally tend moſt powerfully to influence our Minds.

II. By promiſing the aſſiſtance of the Divine Spirit, for the enabling us to do what of our ſelves we cannot.

III. By ſettling ſuch inſtitutions to be conſtantly obſerv'd and us'd in his Church, as are both in their own Nature proper to excite us, and are moreover deſign'd as Means of conveying the Grace of the Holy Spirit to us.

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I. By annexing ſuch Sanctions to his Precepts, as do naturally tend moſt powerfully to influence our Minds.

The Precepts of Chriſtianity are all of them ſo perfectly good in their own Nature, and ſo thorowly agreeable to the Underſtanding of a reaſonable Creature, that every Man to whom they are made known, would readily comply with them, if it were not for the ſeeming Pleaſures of Sin, and the difficulties with which ſome inſtances of Virtue ſeem to be attended; *ſeem*, I ſay; for after all, the Experience of every good Chriſtian fully ſatisfies him, that the preſent Pleaſure, which attends a faithful compliance with the Precepts of the Goſpel, greatly preponderates all its difficulties; as the uneaſineſs and the remorſe, which attend a ſinful Courſe of Life, do on the other hand render its Pleaſures very inconſiderable. *The ways of Wiſdom are ways of Pleaſantneſs, and all her Paths are Peace*; and to him that is become a thorow Chriſtian, *the Commandments of God are not Grievous*. But nevertheleſs, thus it falls out, through the Error and Corruption of Mankind, that Men are frequently miſled by a preſent Pleaſure, which they feel in complying with their ſenſual inclinations; and that the practice of Chriſtian Piety and Virtue, foraſmuch as it thwarts ſuch inclinations, becomes difficult and irkſome to them. Now to balance this, our Bleſſed Saviour hath by his Goſpel propos'd, over and above the preſent ſatisfaction and Pleaſure which are to be found in compliance with his Laws, future rewards for our Obedience, and future Puniſhments for our Diſobedience.

Prov. 3. 17.

1 John 5. 3.

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The Paſſions of Hope and Fear were implanted in our Nature by him who made us, to be a check upon our preſent Senſe; and they are of eſpecial Uſe to us, during this ſtate of our Tryal, to preſerve us from being influenc'd by the falſe and deceitful appearances of preſent and ſenſible Objects. And although we cannot be ſaid to have arrived at a Chriſtian Frame and Conſtitution of Spirit, till we heartily approve the Precepts of our Religion, and chuſe to comply with them, on account of their own intrinſick reaſonableneſs and goodneſs; yet 'tis uſually by the hope of Rewards, and the fear of Puniſhments, that our Minds are at firſt awaken'd, and our thoughts become duly fix'd; and even after we have attain'd to a ſincere and prevalent love of Piety and Virtue upon their own account, yet ſtill our hopes and fears are of great uſe to us, to excite our Minds, to quicken our Endeavours, and to turn the Scale, upon all Emergencies, againſt the temptations of Senſe.

And by how much the more conſiderable the Objects of our hope and fear are, by ſo much the greater is the influence which they will have upon us. For which reaſon, the Goſpel hath propos'd to us *ſuch* Rewards and Puniſhments in the life to come, as to thoſe who thoroughly believe and conſider them, will appear infinitely to outweigh all the preſent Pleaſures by which fooliſh Sinners are courted, and the preſent difficulties by which they are apt to be diſcouraged. For it promiſeth on the one hand, all that Happineſs, which humane Nature compleated by the union of a purified Soul with an incorruptible Body, and reſtor'd

ſtor'd to the favor of Almighty God, is capable of; and on the other hand, it threatens all that Miſery, that Men compos'd of Soul and Body reunited, but unregenerated, and abandon'd by God, are obnoxious to; the particulars of which States are indeed ſuch as we cannot have a full conception of in this Life; but from the general view which the Goſpel hath given us, both of the *Quality*, and the *Duration* of this future Happineſs and Miſery, we have all the reaſon in the World to infer, that nothing, but either downright disbelief of theſe things, or the want of repreſenting them duly to our Minds, by frequent and ſerious conſideration, can render them ineffectual to excite our hope and fear to that degree, as will ſerve to influence our tempers and our lives.

For the farther promoting of which ends, the Goſpel hath fully and clearly aſſerted the Reality and Certainty of theſe future Recompences, not ſpeaking of them, as of what may *poſſibly* be, or what is only *probable*; but as of what we may as ſurely depend upon, as upon any other Truths which it hath reveal'd to us, leaving no room for any profeſs'd Chriſtian to doubt or heſitate concerning them.

And herein it muſt be granted, that the Method taken by the Chriſtian Inſtitution, for exciting our hope and fear, and by conſequence for moving us effectually to comply with its Precepts, altogether ſurpaſſes what has been done by any other inſtitution of Religion. It would be ridiculous to compare the dreams of Pagan Poets, or the Mahometan Fables, concerning the Rewards

wards and Puniſhments of the life to come, with the Promiſes and Threatnings of the Goſpel. As to the *Moſaical* Inſtitution, which we Chriſtians acknowledge to have been Divine, it look'd no farther in its Promiſes and Threatnings, at leaſt not in plain and expreſs terms, than to the good and evil things of the preſent life. Not but that wiſe and good Men amongſt the Jews, looking beyond the Letter of their Law, did ſee, tho' obſcurely, into the other World.

The notion of the Soul's Immortality was indeed from Nature and Reaſon, generally embrac'd by the conſidering part of Mankind: but yet the wiſeſt and beſt Philoſophers expreſs'd themſelves very dubiouſly with reſpect to a future State, of which ſufficient Evidence might be produc'd both from *Socrates* amongſt the *Greeks*, and *Tully* amongſt the *Romans*, who ſeem to have gone as far as any others in the Expectation and Hope of Immortality; but yet could not ſay enough powerfully to excite the hopes of good Men, or the fears of the Wicked, to ſuch a degree, as might ſuffice to balance the Temptations of the preſent Life, at leaſt with the vulgar and unthinking part of Men, which is by far the greater number. Whereas the Goſpel ſpeaks ſo plainly, and ſo poſitively of theſe matters, as may be ſufficient to influence all ſorts of Men by whom it is believed.

To conclude this Particular; The belief of the Recompences of the Life to come, as reveal'd by the Goſpel, is that which has made ſo wide a difference between the Chriſtian and the Pagan

World. What the State of the Heathen was, before the publishing of Christianity, I have obLect. ij. p. 23. serv'd in a former Lecture. Men were almost universally and totally fallen from the *Divine*, and sunk into the *Animal* Life, estranged from God, and enslav'd by the Devil and their own Lusts: But when the Gospel was Published, it awaken'd their Minds, causing them to look forward towards another Life, and to consider the consequences of their present behaviour.

There are indeed in this degenerate State of the Christian Church, abundance of Men professing themselves Christians, who are yet as unreform'd as the worst of Infidels: But then, 'tis because they do not heartily believe, or at least do not at all consider the Principles of Christianity. But as this is certain, that where Christianity is Profes's'd, there are far greater numbers of all Ranks of Men, who are persuaded to the practice of Piety and Virtue, than there are in other parts of the World; so 'tis as evident, that this is in great measure owing to the Principles which I am now speaking of. 'Tis the belief of a future Life, which keeps bad Men in the Christian World, from being much worse than they are: 'Tis that which first awakened and excited most of those, who are reclaimed from an evil Course: And 'tis that, which those who are become Christians in good earnest, hearty lovers of Piety and Virtue, are forc'd often to have recourse to, seriously representing to their own Minds, those future Recompenses which the Gospel assures them of, in order to the strengthening their good Resolutions,

lutions, and the fortifying themſelves againſt the many Temptations they meet with in this evil World. By all which, we may perceive the great Uſefulneſs, and even Neceſſity of theſe Motives, which the Goſpel hath offer'd to our Conſideration. But this is not all; for

II. Our Bleſſed Saviour hath made farther Proviſion againſt the Indiſpoſition and Inability of Men, by promiſing the aſſiſtance of the Divine Spirit, for the enabling us to do what of our ſelves we cannot.

Every created and finite Spirit muſt be ſuppoſed neceſſarily and conſtantly to depend upon that Spirit which is uncreated and infinite, ever ſtanding in need of Influences from him. A ſtate of Innocency and Integrity cannot exempt a Creature from ſuch dependance. This, as I have formerly obſerv'd, reſults from the Nature and Condition of a Creature, to be of it ſelf mutable and fallible, inſomuch that it can by no other means preſerve its Integrity, than by adhering to its Maker, and deriving Influences from him. Much more then, upon the degeneracy of ſuch a Creature, ſome ſpecial influence from God muſt be neceſſary in order to its Recovery. Lect. ij. p. 27, 28.

It was, as I have taken Notice, from neglecting to adhere to God and depend upon him, that our firſt Parents apoſtatiz'd, whereby they and their Off-ſpring became, not mutable and fallible; *that* they were before; but, as Experience too plainly proves, very much diſ- Ibid.

'order'd and weaken'd in all their Faculties, having contracted an Indisposition to that which is Good, together with strong Habits of Sin. The Spirit, having once given way to the Flesh, lost its Authority and Government, which it cannot easily reassume.

In order therefore to a recovery from this state, to effect which is the great design of Christianity, there must be a supply of new strength, some extraordinary influences from the Divine Spirit, to reduce the Soul into good Order, and to preserve it, when so reduc'd. And for this we are beholden to the Undertaking of our great *Mediator*.

'Tis true, good Men in all Ages of the World, such I mean as have had a becoming sense of God, and of natural Religion, have profes's'd their reliance upon God, and there hopes of his assistance; and I question not, but they have in some measure partaken of what they thus hoped for; which was in truth, though not clearly understood by them, the effect of God's Mercy and Grace through Jesus Christ; whose Undertaking, as we Christians believe, had its effect for the benefit of Mankind, ever since the first Promise made to *Adam* after his Fall. But, as the greater part of Man were left to the suggestions of Nature, and the conjectures of Reason in this case, having no expres's Declaration or Promise, which they knew of, upon which they might depend; so the Pious and good Men amongst the Jews themselves, who enjoyed the Divine Oracles, yet believ'd and hop'd for

for the aſſiſtance of the Divine Spirit, rather upon the grounds of natural Religion, than of their own Law, the Promiſes of which, as I before obſerv'd, were chiefly of the good things of this life, what was beyond this being rather obſcurely hinted to them, than plainly expreſs'd. For which reaſon St. *Paul*, who very well underſtood the Jewiſh Law, and was thoroughly acquainted with the ſenſe in which his Countrymen generally underſtood it, ſays, That *ſin taking occaſion by the Commandment, wrought all manner of Concupiſcence*; and again, That *the Commandment, which was ordain'd unto Life, was found to be unto Death*; and again, That *the Law, in that it was weak through the Fleſh, could not* effect that *Righteouſneſs in us*, which it aimed at. By all which he plainly aſſerts, that the Law of *Moſes*, as ſuch, only declared Mens Duty, but brought no aſſiſtance along with it to enable them to perform it; and conſequently, left them in a worſe ſtate, than it found them, without the addition of Goſpel Grace.

Rom. 7, 8. 10. ch. 8. 3, 4.

The Prophets indeed utter'd many Predictions of a plentiful Effuſion of the Divine Spirit: But this was to be in the Days of the *Meſſiah*, as the Jews did, and we Chriſtians now do underſtand thoſe Prophecies to import. And they were accordingly fulfilled in the days of our Bleſſed Saviour; there having been a very plentiful Effuſion of the Divine Spirit upon the Apoſtles, and firſt Preachers, and Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, to enable them to do extraordinary Works, and to capacitate them to diſcharge

Iſ. 44. 3. Ezek. 36. 26, 27. Joel 2. 28.

charge and undergo their Employments and their Sufferings: And not only so, but we have moreover, both from our Lord and his Apostles, express and clear Promises of the Communication of the same Spirit, to enlighten and assist the Minds of Christians in every succeeding Age.

Our Lord to this purpose did in general declare the readiness of Almighty God, *to give his Holy Spirit* to all those who should *ask it of him*, arguing from the goodness of God, and his fatherly care of Men, infinitely exceeding that of any earthly Parent.

Luke 11. 13.

More particularly, our Lord hath given a promise of the Divine Spirit, to all such as shall come to him, and believe in him. At a Solemn Festival of the Jews, *Jesus stood and cryed, saying, If any Man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, Out of his belly shall flow Rivers of living Water.* And *this*, as the Evangelists adds, *He spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: For the Holy Ghost was not yet given*, (not in that plentiful manner, as afterwards,) *because that Jesus was not yet Glorified.* And indeed it was after the glorification of *Jesus*, that this Spirit was given, first in so wonderful a manner, as on the day of Pentecost, as a pledge of his being thenceforward to direct and assist the Church of Christ in all succeeding Ages, a Promise to that purpose being given to all the Members of the Christian Body. For so St. *Peter*, discoursing

John 7. 37, 38, 39.

to

to the Jews upon that occaſion, ſolemnly declares. *Repent*, ſays he, *and be Baptiz'd every one of you, in the Name of Jeſus Chriſt, for the remiſſion of Sins; and ye ſhall receive the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt. For the Promiſe is unto you, and to your Children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God ſhall call.* Acts 2. 38, 39.

'Tis upon this account, that St. *Paul* declares ſo amply the Power which Chriſtians receiv'd by the Goſpel, to enable them to do what, neither by the Abilities of Nature, nor by the Aſſiſtance of the Law of *Moſes*, they could have done. When, in the place before-cited, he had complain'd of *the Law in the Members* whereby Men are *Captivated*, and thereupon expreſs'd very pathetically his Senſe of the *Wretchedneſs* of Men, by reaſon of *the Body of Death* which they carry about with them, he concludes with triumphing in the Grace of the Goſpel, *I thank God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*; farther explaining himſelf in the following Words; *There is therefore now no Condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus, who walk not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit. For the Law of the Spirit of Life in Chriſt Jeſus hath made me free from the Law of Sin and Death. For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the Fleſh, God ſending his own Son in the likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh, and* as a Sacrifice *for Sin, condemned Sin in the Fleſh; that the Righteouſneſs of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit*; as much as to ſay, that by embracing the Goſpel of Chriſt, he was not only Rom. 7. 23, 24. v. 25. ch. 8. 1, 2, 3, 4.

only freed from *Condemnation*, on account either of his past Faults, or his present unavoidable Infirmities; but moreover received strength through the assistance of the Spirit of Christ, which would enable him sincerely, though not without all imperfection, to obey the Laws of God, and to attain to that *Righteousness*, which through the inordinacy of the Flesh, and the weakness of the *Mosaical* Institution, he could not attain to before.

For the same reason elsewhere comparing the Law with the Gospel, he gives the preference to the latter, in very significant terms. The *Law* he stiles *the Ministration of the Letter, which killeth*; the *Gospel, the Ministration of the Spirit, which giveth Life*: One, *the Ministration of Death*, and *of Condemnation, written and engraven in Stone*; the other, *the Ministration of Righteousness, written in fleshly Tables of the Heart, with the Spirit of the living God.*

2 Cor. 3. 3, 6, 7, 8, 9.

But 'tis needless to recite more Passages, the New Testament is full of them; this being the great Promise of the Gospel, declar'd throughout the Sacred Writings, that the Divine Spirit should be imparted in a free and plentiful manner to those, who should embrace the Christian Religion.

And this certainly is a sufficient Provision against the indisposition and inability of Men's Minds to comply with the Divine Will, when reveal'd to them. *The Law* of God, as St. *Paul* expresses it, *is Holy, and the Commandment Holy, Just and Good*; the Precepts of the Gospel are *Spiritual*,

Rom. 7. 12, 14.

Spiritual, and Divine; whereas we are *Carnal and ſold under Sin:* But the Spirit of God can reſcue us from this Slavery, by enlightning our Minds, fixing our Thoughts, inclining our Hearts, and ſpiritualizing our Affections, making us not only *to delight in the Law of God after the inner Man*; but *to walk* alſo *not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit.* The Example of our Lord was exact, and altogether perfect, and we muſt not hope in this life to attain to the ſame exactneſs and perfection: But as it was upon account of its Perfection fit to be propos'd to our imitation; ſo the ſame Spirit which dwelt in our Lord, without meaſure, can form us by degrees after his likeneſs, and make us in our meaſure to reſemble him both in our Tempers and Practices.

If it be objected, that we want inſtances amongſt the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, to verify this Doctrine, that the Divine Spirit is thus imparted by the Goſpel; the Anſwer is eaſy. The primitive times of Chriſtianity abounded with inſtances of this kind. Such were the Apoſtles, who could every one of them have ſaid, as St. *Paul* did, *Be ye followers of me, even as I alſo am of Chriſt.* And ſuch were abundance of the Members of the Chriſtian Body, which liv'd in and near thoſe times. Nay ſuch, thanks be to God, even ſince the degeneracy of the Chriſtian Church, there have been and are to be met with in every Age; though, God knows, too few, to the great ſcandal of Unbelievers, who are not willing to conſider this matter thoroughly,

1 Cor. 11. 1.

roughly, but are forward to catch at any ſeeming advantage, for juſtifying their Infidelity. In a word, we might all of us be inſtances of this kind, to the honour of our Lord, and to the credit of our Holy Profeſſion, if we would diligently uſe the means appointed for the attaining this Divine Spirit, and faithfully improve all his kindly motions upon our Minds; which brings me to the next particular I nam'd, *viz.*

III. That our Bleſſed Saviour hath made farther Proviſion in this Caſe, by ſettling ſuch Inſtitutions to be conſtantly obſerv'd and us'd in his Church, as are both in their own Nature proper to excite us, and are moreover deſign'd as Means of conveying the Grace of the Holy Spirit to us.

The excellency of the *Precepts* and *Example* of our Lord will not engage us to Obedience and Imitation, unleſs we have them much in our view: The powerful *Motives* of the Goſpel will not affect us, unleſs they be ſeriouſly and frequently conſider'd by us: And the *Grace* of the Divine Spirit it ſelf, though freely offered, yet will prove ineffectual, unleſs it be thankfully and carefully entertain'd and improv'd. Now as the indiſpoſition of Mens minds is great, ſo experience teacheth, that either the Buſineſs, or the Pleaſures of Life are moreover apt to employ or divert them to that degree, that unleſs ſome farther courſe be taken to turn the Stream of their Thoughts the right way, all that we

we have hitherto mention'd may be loſt upon them. Beſides that the Spirit of God being inviſible, and his influences, ſuitable to his Nature, ſecret and indiſcernible to ſenſual and worldly Men (which is the reaſon our Saviour aſſigns, why *the World cannot receive him*, viz. *becauſe it ſeeth him not, neither knoweth him*;) it may therefore be very fit, nay neceſſary for us, who are us'd ſo much to converſe with ſenſible Objects, to have ſome ſtated, external, and ſenſible Means, for the deriving his internal Grace to our Spirits. Our bleſſed Saviour therefore knowing this to be our Caſe, hath kindly and bountifully provided for us in this inſtance alſo. John 14. 17.

To this purpoſe, he hath not only caus'd his Word to be Written by thoſe who Converſed with him, and were Commiſſion'd and Inſpir'd by him, which we may at all times have free recourſe to our ſelves; but he hath farthermore appointed certain Inſtitutions, to be conſtantly obſerv'd in his Church, and ſettled an Order of Men as his Miniſters, to ſee them obſerv'd, and to perform their part in the obſervance of them. Thus he order'd the Apoſtles and their Succeſſors in the work of the Miniſtry, to receive into the number of his Diſciples, all ſuch as ſhould profeſs their Repentance and Faith in him, by the external Rite of waſhing them with Water, in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, thereby liſting and enrolling them, as Servants of the Bleſſed Trinity, and engaging them by a ſolemn and publick Profeſſion to declare themſelves ſuch.

He hath farther ordain'd, That all his Diſciples, thus initiated, ſhall not only perform acts of Chriſtian Devotion by themſelves, but moreover that they ſhall frequently meet together, to joyn in the more publick Worſhip of God through Jeſus Chriſt, and mutually to exhort and encourage each other; particularly, that on a certain Day, every Week, beſides other occaſional Aſſemblies, they ſhall meet in moſt ſolemn manner, to offer up the ſacrifice of Praiſe and Prayer to the great Father of all, in the Name of his only begotten Son; and that at the ſame time his Word ſhall be Read and Preach'd amongſt them, in order to the improving their Underſtandings, and the awakening their Conſciences, and the cauſing them to remember and conſider the great Truths which they profeſs to believe.

He hath farther appointed, That in theſe ſolemn Aſſemblies, they ſhall frequently commemorate the great Sacrifice which he made of himſelf upon the Croſs, by partaking of that Entertainment which he hath aſſign'd them at his own Table, thereby not only profeſſing themſelves all Members of the ſame Body; but at the ſame time alſo repreſenting to God, to themſelves, and to one another, the infinite love of God to Sinners, through a *Mediator*, and ſolemnly engaging themſelves afreſh to continue the Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt.

Now theſe Inſtitutions, howſoever they may be deſpiſed by the prophane, unthinking, or ſupercilious ſort of Infidels, whoſoever ſeriouſly con-

conſiders them, cannot but ſee, that they have a natural and ſtrong tendency to engage the Thoughts, and awaken the Minds of thoſe that uſe them, and thereby to render both the *Precepts*, and the *Example*, and the *Motives* of the Goſpel uſeful to the ends for which they were deſign'd.

And if we will yet farther look into the deſign of them, we ſhall find, that they are moreover appointed by our Lord, as means of deriving and conveying the Grace of his Holy Spirit to our Souls.

Thus, when our Lord commiſſion'd his Apoſtles *to make Diſciples out of all Nations, baptizing them, and teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever he had commanded them*, he immediately ſubjoyns, *And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the World*; which can import no leſs, than his aſſiſting and bleſſing them and their Succeſſors, in the faithful diſcharge of their Miniſtry. He elſe-where declares in general, that *where two or three are gathered together in his Name, there is he in the midſt of them*, *viz.* by the preſence and aſſiſtance of his Holy Spirit. Matth. 28. 19, 20. Matth. 18. 20.

As to the Sacrament of Baptiſm, St. *Peter* is very expreſs, in the place before cited, where exhorting his Hearers to *Repent* and *be Baptized*, he encourages them by propoſing the Benefits which they ſhould receive thereby, namely, *remiſſion of Sins*, and *the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt*, *the promiſe* of which, he ſays, was not to that Generation only, but *to their Children, and to all that* Acts 2. 38, 39.

that were afar off, even as many as God ſhould call. For which reaſon our Saviour himſelf, in
John 3. 5. his diſcourſe with *Nicodemus* joyn'd together *Regeneration by Water* and *by the Sipirit*; and St. *Paul*, ſpeaking of the ſame Rite, ſays, that
Tit. 3. 5, 6. Chriſtians were *ſav'd, according to the Mercy of God, by the laver of Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt, which was ſhed upon them abundantly, through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour*; implying, that Baptiſm with Water was the way of entitling Chriſtians to that Divine Gift, and a means of conveying it to them.

And ſo likewiſe as to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, it is intended not only to exhibit to Chriſtians the Elements of Bread and Wine in Memory of our Saviour's Paſſion; but
1 Cor. 10.16. according to St. *Paul's* Expreſſion, *the Cup of Bleſſing*, then *bleſſed* is *the Communion of the Blood of Chriſt*, *the Bread* then *broken* is *the Communion of the Body of Chriſt*, viz. a *Communion* or *Participation* of all the Benefits purchas'd by breaking the Body and ſhedding the Blood of *Jeſus*, of which a principal one is, the Grace of the Divine Spirit to ſtrengthen our Souls.

To conclude this particular; The Goſpel is
Rom. 8. 2. ſtyl'd, as I before obſerv'd, *the Law of the Spirit of Life*; the Miniſters of the New Teſta-
2 Cor. 3. 6. ment are ſaid to be *Miniſters not of the Letter, but of the Spirit.* When they perform the Offices of their Function, one is ſaid *to Plant*, and
1 Cor. 3. 5, 6. another *to Water*, whilſt *God giveth the increaſe*, viz. by the Operation of his Holy Spirit accompanying theſe external Miniſtrations; and finally the Church

Church is ſaid to be *the Temple of God*, foraſmuch as *the Spirit of God dwelleth amongſt* and *in* the Members of it; all which paſſages do evidently import, that the external Miniſtrations of Religion in the Chriſtian Church, are deſign'd as ſo many means of deriving the internal Grace of the good Spirit to thoſe who faithfully make uſe of them.

And as to this, I may preſume that it will not be pretended that any other inſtitution of Religion hath afforded the like means. The Jews indeed abounded in external Ordinances; which they were commanded to obſerve, as the Prophets themſelves intimate, and the Apoſtles more fully aſſure us, not as good in themſelves, but as ſuited to their temper and preſent circumſtances; which to free and generous Minds were indeed unpleaſant and burdenſome. Nor were they attended with that Promiſe of internal Grace and Aſſiſtance, which is annexed to the Chriſtian Inſtitutions. For as the Author to the *Hebrews* at large Diſcourſes, The Jewiſh *ſervice ſtood only in Meats and Drinks, and divers Waſhings and carnal Ordinances, impoſ'd on them until the time of Reformation*; all which were *only Examples and Shadows of heavenly things*: But *Jeſus hath obtain'd a more excellent Miniſtry, by how much alſo he is the Mediator of a better Covenant, which was eſtabliſh'd upon better Promiſes*, viz. ſuch as theſe, that God *would put his Laws into their Mind, and write them in their Hearts; and that he would be to them a God, and they ſhould be to him a People.* Heb. 9. 10. ch. 8. 5. 6. 10.

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Every other Profeſſion of Religion had likewiſe its external Rites and Ordinances belonging to it; but I think I may fairly leave it to the Judgment of any ſerious Deiſt, whether the Chriſtian Inſtitutions already mentioned, are not much more rational, decent, eaſy, and every way better adapted to the ends for which they are deſign'd, than thoſe of any other Religion, and conſequently, whether in this inſtance alſo our Bleſſed Saviour hath not made the beſt Proviſion for us.

There remains yet one farther Difficulty which fallen Men lay under, which I am to conſider in the laſt place, and to ſhew that our Lord hath in that inſtance likewiſe made due Proviſion for us, *viz.*

Fourthly, An incapacity of removing thoſe other evil and miſchievous conſequences, to which their Sins had expos'd them; and of obtaining for themſelves that compleat Salvation which they ſtood in need of.

The remaining Conſequences of our Apoſtacy from God, which I took notice of in a former Lecture, are all the Calamities of this preſent life, concluded at laſt with a Seperation of Soul and Body by Death, and followed in a future ſtate with all thoſe Evils, to which an immortal Soul ſeperated from its Body is there liable, which are more than we are able to enumerate, or ſo much as to conceive in the ſtate in which we now are.

Lect. ij. p. 21, 22.

That Men were of themſelves altogether unable either to avoid theſe Evils, or to deliver them-

themſelves from them, is evident. No humane Wit or Power, as Experience proves, can ward off abundance of thoſe Calamities to which all Men are obnoxious from the preſent ſtate of things in this lower World; nor can the wealth of the richeſt Man upon Earth purchaſe an Exemption from them. The wiſe Man muſt die, as certainly as the Fool; the Prince, as the Peaſant; and the Rich Man, as the Beggar. Nor have any of theſe the leaſt power to diſpoſe of their Souls, when they are diſmiſs'd into the World of Spirits.

Much leſs are they able to obtain for themſelves that Salvation, which will compleat their Happineſs. All that is done for us in this life, even by our Bleſſed Saviour himſelf, is but the beginning of our Salvation; we are by him put into a ſtate of Salvation, and guided in the way which leads directly and ſurely to the completion of it: But we cannot be ſaid to *be ſaved*, till every evil diſpoſition be perfectly rooted out of our Souls; till our Spirits are reſtor'd to their perfect Health, and all the Habits of Piety and Virtue are confirm'd in them; nor indeed till our Bodies alſo ſhall be raiſed again and united to our Souls.

For although the wiſeſt of Philoſophers, and the beſt of Chriſtians have juſtly complain'd of theſe Bodies of Fleſh, as clogs to their Spirits, and therefore may have deſir'd and choſen to be deliver'd from them, in order to have their Spirits ſet at liberty from their preſent incumbrance; yet the natural abhorrence which all Men have of

the ſeparation of their two eſſential parts made by Death, and that ardent deſire of life which is implanted in humane Nature, ſeem plainly to intimate, that we cannot be compleatly happy without conſiſting of Soul and Body united. And the Goſpel confirms this Notion to us, by cauſing us to wait for our compleat Salvation till the Reſurrection of the Body. Thus St. *Paul*, having mentioned *the earneſt expectation* which *the whole Creation* hath of *being deliver'd* from *Vanity*, and that *bondage of Corruption* to which it is at preſent *ſubjected*, he adds, *And not only they, but our ſelves alſo, which have the firſt fruits of the Spirit, even we our ſelves groan within our ſelves, waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of our Body.* And to the ſame purpoſe again; *We that are in this Tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be uncloath'd; but cloath'd upon; that mortality might be ſwallow'd up of life*; intimating, that Chriſtians will not be compleatly happy, till *their Bodies* ſhall be *redeem'd* from *Corruption*; and till their Souls ſhall be *cloath'd* with ſuch Bodies as ſhall be prepar'd for them at the Reſurrection; till which time, they will not be deliver'd from all the effects of the Divine Diſpleaſure, nor clearly *manifeſted* to be *the Children of God.*

Rom. 8. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.

2 Cor. 5. 4.

Now 'tis apparent, paſt all diſpute, that we can do nothing of all this for our ſelves; and that no other Inſtitution of Religion, beſides the *Chriſtian*, hath diſcover'd to us, how it ſhall be done for us.

But in this inſtance alſo, our Bleſſed Saviour hath made abundant Proviſion. The Goſpel hath aſſur'd us, and we Chriſtians do firmly believe,

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as fundamental Articles of our Faith, that as our Lord died to made Expiation for our Sins, ſo he roſe again from the dead; and that then, according to his own Declaration, *All power was given unto him in Heaven and in Earth*; that God, *having rais'd him from the dead, hath ſet him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all Principality and Power, and Might and Dominion, and every Name that is named, not only in this World, but alſo in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet; and given him to be the Head over all things to the Church:* as alſo, that he will according to his Promiſe come again to perfect the great Work which he hath undertaken, and which he hath been carrying on by all the Methods I have hitherto mention'd.

Matth. 28. 18.

Eph. 1. 20, 21, 22.

Now allowing all this to be true, we have a plain account, how we ſhall be deliver'd from all the remaining evil Conſequences of our Fall, and be made perfectly happy, to the utmoſt of our deſires and capacities.

For hereby we are aſſur'd, That we have now a powerful Friend in Heaven in our own Nature; One who *can be touch'd with a feeling of our Infirmities*, having been *in all points tempted like as we are*; and One who hath ſuch an Intereſt in the Father of all, that by him we may *go freely to the throne of Grace, obtaining Mercy and finding Grace to help in time of need*: who although he doth not think fit to deliver us at preſent from all the Calamities of this Life, yet will cauſe *all things to work together for our good*; *not ſuffering us to be tempted above that we are able, but with the temptation alſo,*

Heb. 4. 15, 16

Rom. 8. 28.

1 Cor. 10. 13.

making a way to escape, that we may be able to bear
2 Cor. 12. 9. *it*; affording us such a Measure of *his Grace*, as shall be *sufficient for us*, and causing *his strength* to be *made perfect in our weakness*: Who, although he permits us to remain liable to Death, as the just
Rom. 14. 9. Reward of our Transgression, yet being *Lord both of the Dead and the Living*, will receive our Souls at the hour of Death, and take care of them during their state of Seperation, reviving them with his Influences, and filling them with the comfortable Expectation of their more compleat Happiness. Finally we are assur'd, that as he will obtain of the Father, and confer upon his faithful Servants, all that is truly good and fit for them, during this state of their Tryal, and preserve their Spirits which they have committed to his Custody, till his second Appearance; so that he will come again in Person, redeem their dead Bodies, and perfect their Souls, reuniting them, and fully instating them in the favour of God, and bestowing upon them the Inheritance of Children; of all which he hath given them at present *his Spirit*, as the sure *Pledge* and *Earnest*.

This is that Provision, which our Blessed Saviour, according to the Declaration of his Gospel, hath graciously made, in this last instance of our Necessity; after which I need add no more, this being the completion of our Felicity, and of our *Mediator's* Undertaking.

And thus I have finish'd what I at first proposed, with respect to the *intrinsick* Evidence of Christianity, shewing its *Credibility* from considering the *Persons* whom *Christ Jesus came to save*; the Nature

Nature of the *Salvation* which he propoſeth; and the *Method* in which he hath procur'd it.

If in doing this, I have laid down *a true Scheme* of our holy Profeſſion (as I am verily perſuaded I have) according to the Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, and the general ſenſe of the Chriſtian Church; and if through this whole *Scheme* there is nothing but what is highly worthy of God, and extremely beneficial to his Creatures; nay if according to this Repreſentation of Chriſtianity, it not only infinitely excels all other Inſtitutions of Religion, but is ſuch, as that we are not able to frame an Idea of any Inſtitution comparable to it, (as I firmly believe upon impartial conſideration it will appear to be) it muſt then be granted that *This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the World, to ſave Sinners.*

This therefore I heartily offer to the ſerious thoughts of all ſuch Men, as have a juſt ſenſe of *God* and of *natural Religion* upon their Minds, and have accuſtom'd themſelves *to think ſeriouſly* of matters of importance.

The *external* atteſtation, which God hath given to the Goſpel, by *Prophecies*, *Miracles*, and an wonderful *Succeſs* in its Propagation, will tend, where duly obſerv'd, not only farther to confirm this *intrinſick* Evidence, but alſo to awaken and excite the minds of thoſe, who are not us'd to ſerious thinking; or are ſtrongly prejudic'd againſt Religion in general, through the violence of their corrupt inclinations. But when all is done, here we muſt fix; being aſſur'd, that as no Revelation can be

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from God, which is not worthy of him; so whatsoever is so highly worthy of God as the Christian Revelation is, must be *credible* upon its *own account.*

May we, who profess to believe the Gospel, both on account of its *intrinsick* Evidence, and the *external* attestation it hath had, and to be sensible of the excellent *Method* therein propos'd for *the Salvation of Sinners*, prove to the World the reality and the stedfastness of this our Faith, by its influence upon our Spirits and our Lives. Then shall we our selves yield a farther attestation to the truth of our Blessed Saviour's Religion, by demonstrating its Virtue and its Excellency to the unbelieving World.

And may Almighty God, who hath thus graciously reveal'd himself to Mankind, by his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, send forth his holy Spirit, to accompany the preaching of this his Gospel, so that it may be more universally receiv'd, and more thoroughly obey'd in all the Nations of the Earth, to the Glory of his Holy Name, and the Salvation of Sinners.

Now to the One God and Father of all, and to our Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, with the Eternal Spirit; our great Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, be ascribed, as is most due, all Honor, Praise, and Glory, forever. Amen.

FINIS.

Advertiſement.

THE Author of theſe Lectures, having in the *Second* of them taken notice of an Objection, which he has not been able to conſider, within the compaſs of theſe *Eight* Diſcourſes, without interrupting the Order which he had propos'd to himſelf, deſigns, God willing, to publiſh a *Ninth* by way of Appendix to theſe, as a reply to the ſaid Objection.